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NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

HERBARIUM FOR SALE.—The collection of the Swiss botanist, the late M. Gay, is now offered for sale at the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris. This collection is of inestimable value, and embraces the whole European Flora. The author has worked upon it with rare patience and fidelity, adding to the description and analysis of each plant a complete list of the works in which it has been described; it contains ninety thousand different specimens. Dr. Henri de Saussure, from whom this information is derived, believes the Herbarium to be placed at the low price of 30,000 francs. Propositions from those wishing to purchase would be gladly entertained. Parties may address (post-paid) Dr. HENRI DE SAUSSURE, *Genthod, près Genève, Suisse.*

A FERN NEW TO OUR FLORA.—I enclose a specimen of a fern found in July, in shaded rocks at Berlin Falls, N. H., which I judge to be *Aspidium fragrans* Sw. (Gray's Manual, p. 598). As this fern is mentioned as occurring only in Wisconsin or high northward, the locality is perhaps new and worth noting. It occurs in the crevices of a perpendicular cliff a little below the falls, on the east side of the river; this cliff is plainly visible from the other bank. It is somewhat remarkable that the plant has not been before detected in so frequented a locality.

I found *Aspidium aculeatum* in a place called "the Gulch," about four miles from Gorham village; but this I believe has previously been found in the mountains. This gulch is an interesting place, where ice remains during the summer, and I regret that I had not time to explore it thoroughly.

I was engaged chiefly in looking for lichens, and I found, at Berlin Falls, an interesting plant, *Biatora lucida*, which is probably new to the White Mountain region. This pretty lichen is quite common on stones in walls in this vicinity (New Bedford). Professor Tuckerman, to whom I communicated it, at first pronounced it Arctic; but on seeing specimens, confirmed my determination. *Verrucaria margacea*, which was found by Mr. Tuckerman last season in the White Mountains, I found this summer at Clyde River Falls, Vermont, near Lake Memphremagog. At the base of "Owl's Head," on this lake, there is a cliff, the face of which is covered with *Placodium elegans* in large patches, giving it a very lively appearance. This lichen, I be-

lieve, does not usually occur so far from the coast."—H. WILLEY, *New Bedford, Mass.*

Mr. H. Mann, to whom we referred the specimen, says, "The fern (*Aspidium fragrans* Sw.) which Mr. H. Willey sends, is from quite a new, and therefore interesting locality, bringing it for the first time within the borders of New England. I believe it has not been found before on this side of the Saguenay River (where it is quite common), three hundred miles farther north."

A THORNLESS FORM OF THE HONEY LOCUST TREE.—I have been for the last three months watching a cluster of four Honey Locust trees on my farm that have no thorns. I thought that probably the thorns had been broken off by a large flood we had last September, and that new wood that might grow this spring would have thorns the same as others. There is now a fine growth of new wood, but no thorns on it. It is new to me, and others that I have had see them. Is it something unusual, or are they sometimes thornless?—J. HUGHES HUNT, *Harrison Junction, Ohio.*

A very obscure form without thorns, which by some is supposed to be a new species, has been known to exist in the Western States.—EDS.

MONSTROUS ROSES.—There is a small rose-bush in this village which bears flowers called "very double." Every summer, some of the blossoms send up a column or continuation of the receptacle from the middle of the flower. This column, after running up straight for half an inch, branches off and bears buds, which develop into small roses later than the first rose below. These "rosettes," or little roses if you like better, are as perfect as any flowers in the bush. In one instance, I counted seven little roses growing from the centre of a single flower. Another plant, in the same yard, this year produced a monstrosity a little different from the one above mentioned. The cup was very shallow and of thin texture. The points of the calyx were more leaf-like than common, one of the sepals having five leaflets, another four, another three, another two, and the other only one. Inside this calyx or whorl of leaves were plenty of petals, a few stamens, but the pistils were united into a column about half an inch long, nearly as large as the stem below the flower. This column had small prickles on two sides, and towards the top were some petals, colored on one edge, and green on the other, with fringes imitating leaflets on the green edge. At the top of the column appear five leaves, with stipules and leaflets in perfect condition. These are examples going to prove that "the blossom is a sort of branch, and its

parts leaves," and "that the receptacle of a flower is of the nature of the stem." See Gray's Botanical Text-Book, p. 230.—W. J. BEAL, *Union Springs, N. Y.*

IDENTIFICATION OF LICHENS BY A CHEMICAL TEST.—The Rev. W. A. Leighton continues his series of papers on this subject in the "Annals." He has lately given a notice of the Abbé Cœman's essay on the *Cladonia* of the herbarium of the great lichenologist, Acharius, and the results of the application to his own herbarium of a chemical test, as a means of deciphering species of Lichens. The reaction, which is found so useful, is that of hydrate of potash, which in certain cases produces a yellow color, whilst in others there is no reaction, or only a slight fuscescence. In no case, says Mr. Leighton, is the reaction of greater utility than in the difficult tribe of *Cladonia*, that *crux* of lichenologists, where its application enables us, with admirable precision and exactness, to determine the various species, to redistribute the confounded species, and to refer to their proper systematic places the innumerable varieties and forms which may resemble each other in external character.—*Quarterly Journal of Science, London.*

ZOÖLOGY.

THE BITTERN.—I notice in your August issue a letter from Mr. Endicott, in which he rather questions the accuracy of my account of the habits of the American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), page 405, Ornithology of New England.

I am perfectly familiar with the meadows which Mr. Endicott refers to, have lived for eleven years within two or three miles of them, and have hunted them times innumerable. I never saw more than two Bitterns there in the area of a hundred acres, and doubt if any other person ever did. They seem to be most numerous in that locality in September, about the time of Snipe-shooting, and doubtless are then on the passage from the north. So I do not think it strange that Mr. Endicott has never met with many of the nests. But we cannot establish the habits of a species from individual cases, we must *generalize*.

The Bittern, as a general thing, in New England, judging from the observation of the majority of my friends and correspondents, and my own, oftener nests in bushes than on the ground, and in some localities it gathers in communities, scattered and detached if you will, but still communities, not of course extensive heronries, such as we see among the Night Herons and others, but still heronries.

Almost every nest that I ever saw or heard of was built in low